

Wisdom from Above :

O R,

Considerations
A N D
REFLECTIONS

Tending to explain, establish and
 promote the

CHRISTIAN LIFE;

O R

That *Holiness*, without which
 no Man shall see the Lord.

Selected out of the more studied Sermons and
 Discourses of some of the most learned and
 judicious Writers of this Age.

P A R T I

By a Lover of TRUTH, and of
 the SOULS of MEN.

But the *Wisdom that is from Above*, is first pure,
 then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated,
 full of Mercy, and of good Fruits ; without Parti-
 ality, and without Hypocrify, Jam. iii. 7.

The THIRD EDITION Corrected.

L O N D O N :

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CONTINUATION
OF
REED'S GOLDEN
CHRONICLE





TO THE
READER.

A R T of these Im-
 portant Considerations
 and Reflections were
 found among the Papers of a
 very pious, retired, and con-
 templative Gentleman. Those
 who best knew him, have Rea-
 son to believe, that he lived by
 these Measures, and is now en-
 ter'd into that Portion of the
 Joy of his **L O R D**, which is
 allotted to those, who make it

vi To the READER.

their great Business to love,
to serve Him with their whole
Heart.

Many more of the same Na-
ture are added by another Hand;
most of which too he had occa-
sionally, and at several Times,
copied out of judicious and ap-
proved Writers in our own
Language.

They are now published with
this View, That they may very
probably be of good Use to all
pious and attentive Readers;
and especially to younger Per-
sons; and to those who, though
they have more Years, yet have
employed their Thoughts much
less than they ought to have
done, in an Affair of this vast
Concern, (viz.) Whether they
shall

To the READER. vii
shall be happy or miserable to
all Eternity !

A due and serious Reflection
upon these Considerations, and
an home Application made to
every Man's own Case and Con-
science, may, it is hoped, serve
by the Blessing of God, to inform
some Persons better in the Na-
ture, and in the necessary Dut-
ies of our Religion; to rectify
their wrong Notions of both,
and their fatal Mistake concern-
ing themselves; to awaken some
bad Men out of a very dange-
rous, because false Security, as
to their future State, and also
to excite, and to promote the
good Inclinations and Purposes
of the most sincere Christians;
and to quicken their Endeavours

A 4 after

viii To the READER.

after farther Degrees of Holiness, and of the Love of GOD.

I think we may say of these, (as of other wise, pious, and christian Thoughts) what a great Author did of the Discourses of a very excellent and learned Writer, (viz.) That he must be either a very extraordinary good Man, or a very bad Man, who is not the better for perusing them, if he will give himself the Leisure to weigh and apply them, as Things of this Consequence deserve.

Wisdom



Wisdom from Above :
 Considerations
 AND
 REFLECTIONS

Tending to Explain, Establish, and
Promote the

CHRISTIAN LIFE, &c.

P A R T I


 Religion, that is, the Knowledge, and the Fear, and Love of God, and a due Regard in all things to Him, as to the first Author, and

last End of our Being, and the Giver of all Good ; and Obedience to his Will and Laws, is avouched by the most enlightened of the *Pagan Sages*, to be the Beginning, and the Cause, or Foundation ; and also the Rule, or the Measure of that Happiness, which humane Nature can attain to, in this present mortal State.

[Tis the great and apparent Design of the Christian Religion, to reconcile us to God, by the Mediation of his Son our Blessed Redeemer, who, in order thereto, hath procured for us, by his Obedience and Sufferings on our Behalf, these unspeakable Blessings, *viz.* The Remission of our Sins ; the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit to enlighten, to direct and govern us, to renew and sanctify us ; and eternal Life, or endless Happiness with Him in the Kingdom of his Father.

And

And in order to obtain that eternal Life, or Happiness, our Religion teaches, obliges, and enables us, by the Grace of the Gospel, to recover or retrieve, In some good Measure, that Image of, and Likeness to God, in and after which Man was at first created.

Now this Image of God, consists not only in our having immortal Spirits, and also Dominion over all the inferior Parts of the Creation; but chiefly in those noble and divine Powers, Faculties, or Capacities of knowing, and of loving God, with which he hath endowed us, and whereby he hath exalted us above all the visible Creation.

[As it is essential, or most proper, necessary and suitable to the Nature, and to the Happiness of God himself (as far as we are able to conceive) to know, and to love Himself, and his own infinite

Per-

Perfections ; so, since He has given us an Understanding, whereby we can in some Measure know Him ; and a Will and Affections, whereby we can love Him, it must be both most agreeable to our Nature, as we are rational Creatures, and most conducive, or rather necessary to our Happiness, as we are Christians, to employ those Faculties which GOD gave us to that End for which he hath given them to us ; (*viz.*) to enquire and seek after Him ; to know, and to admire, and to adore, and to love Him far above all things ; to choose Him as our Portion both here and for ever ; and to cleave unto Him with our whole Heart, as our last End, and our sovereign Good, or our only true Felicity.

And as the Perfection of this Knowledge, and of this Love of GOD, will be the utmost Perfection of our Nature, and of our Happiness, in the next State ; so do we recover

recover that Image of GOD (which is our Excellency and our Glory) in this Life, in the same Degree in which we do improve in the further Knowledge and Love of GOD ; and in resembling Him more and more, to our Power, in his imitable Perfection: Whereby we may be the better fitted for those, yet higher Degrees of the Knowledge, and of the Love of GOD, and of Likeness to Him, and for that Enjoyment of Him, in which the Happiness of the next Life consists, and is consummated.

[Nothing can be a just Cause of true and solid Peace and Joy, to a wise and considering Man, but a well grounded Hope, and a Christian Assurance, of his having an Interest in the Mercy and Love of GOD, through the Mediation of JESUS CHRIST; supported by a good Conscience, i. e. By a steady Belief of the Gospel;

By

By that sincere Repentance and forsaking all Sin, which is there required; by a firm Resolution, and an honest, actual, constant Endeavour to keep all God's Commandments.

In short, this Peace and Joy must be supported by such a sincere, prevailing Love to God, above all things, that there is nothing which he will not do or suffer, rather than knowingly, and deliberately, and willingly disobey, and displease his most gracious Father, and his merciful Redeemer; and thereby forfeit the Hopes he hath of God's Care and Protection here, and of that eternal Life, which is the great Promise of the Gospel. False, most false, are the Hopes, and miserable, for ever miserable, will be the end of all those pretended Christians, who have not thus learned CHRIST; but content themselves with calling Him

LORD,

LORD, LORD, without either believing or doing those things which He saith.

[Religion, or a due Regard to Almighty GOD, in all we design and act with Deliberation and Choice ; and a constant Aim and Study to serve and to please Him, in the general Course of our Lives, is that which distinguishes a Man from a brute Beast ; a wise Man from a Fool ; and a sincere, true Christian, from an Hypocrite, who hath a Form of Godliness, without the Power of it.

[The great End and Business of this Life, is to fit our selves more and more for the Enjoyment of GOD in the next, (viz.) by our loving, obeying, and resembling Him here as far as we are able ; placing all our Happiness in a Sense of his Love to us ; and all our Hopes in the Mediation of our Blessed Redeemer.

We are so far only Christians indeed, as we are more heartily concerned for, and do take more Thought, and more Care about the Life to come, than about the few Moments we are to live here.

A cold, heartless Care, and a faint negligent Endeavour in the Matters of Religion will avail us nothing at all. God will have the whole Heart, which he made for Himself, or no Part of it.

[Consider well what you would do, if you were sure to die within a few Days ; and since this Day may possibly be your last, defer not till To-morrow, to take such Care of your immortal Soul, as Wisdom, and even good Sense, will direct, in a Matter of so vast Moment, as is the being either happy or miserable to all Eternity.

He is the only wise, and the only happy Man, who makes it his chief Care and Business so to

live

live every Day, as that he can at all Times think on CHRIST's coming to Judgment with Joy and Comfort.

[Either this is not the Gospel of CHRIST, which we call so, or we are not Christians, who live in such palpable Neglect, or Contempt of its most express and fundamental Laws: These, we know, are Repentance, or forsaking every kind of Sin; such a true living Faith in CHRIST our Redeemer; and such sincere, prevailing Love of God, and of our Blessed LORD and Saviour, and Hope in the Promises He hath made us of the Remission of Sin, and of eternal Life, as do effectually engage us in a constant, uniform, cheerful Obedience to all his Commands.

[Tis downright Madness, or wilful, inexcusable Stupidity, not to believe the Gospel; the Truth whereof, the Miracles and Resurrection

tection of CHRIST; the Blood of the Martyrs; and the Confession of the Devils themselves, put it beyond all doubt: But 'tis yet a far greater Madness, and the most unaccountable Folly, and brutish Want of true Sense, or Reason and Judgment, when you are assured, and do believe, that the Gospel is true, to live so as you would do, if you were sure that 'tis false.

Make it your chief Design, and your great Busines, so to live in this World, as that you may have GOD for your Friend: So shall you have no Evil to fear; and you may reasonably hope for all that Happiness, which an infinitely wise, and powerful, and good Father, can bestow upon his dearest Children.

[Call to Mind, in the Bitterness of thy Soul, and with the deepest Sorrow and Contrition, or a broken Heart, all those Years in which

which thou hast perverfly loved thy carnal, perishing self, i. e. enslaved thy Soul to thy Body's: and hast foolishly and ungratefully neglected that Salvation, which was purchased for thee by the Blood of the Son of God. Consider with the utmost Shame and Confusion, how little thou hast loved thy God, and thy Blessed Redeemer, whose loving Kindness, and Mercy, and Goodness, hath so abounded towards thee, and waited for thy Return to thy Duty all thy Life long.

[Nothing certainly can be more pleasing to God, nothing can be more beneficial to Mankind, than to season the Minds of young Persons with the Morals of JESUS CHRIST, before the false Maxims and evil Customs of the World get Possession of their Hearts, and engage them in that broad Way which leads to Destruction; out of which so few do ever recover them-

themselves, and wherein Millions of those, who call themselves Christians, perish, and are lost for ever.

[Tis our truest Interest, as well as our Duty, and therefore ought to be our Joy, and our chief Delight, to keep all our L O R D 's Commands ; since the End and Design of them all, is to bring us nigh to God ; to enable us to retrieve that Image of God, in which we were at first created ; and by thus making us like to Him, to fit us for the Enjoyment of the greatest Happiness we are capable of, in his Presence for evermore.

A wise Christian will often consider, that he is called to Holiness, and to an exact Purity of Soul and Body, in order to his seeing God, and living with him for ever. He will breathe after those true and unmixed Pleasures, and that inward Peace and Joy, which springs from a Sense of God's Love and

and Favour to him; from a good Conscience, and an assured Hope and Expectation of a blessed Immortality. These Reflections will extinguish in him all Thoughts of, and Inclinations to those low and sordid, Fleshy and worldly Lusts or Desires, which war against the Soul.

[That mysterious Way of Perfection which some pretend to, is a Source of Illusion, leading Men into endless Wandrings, and is dangerous to true Religion, which it often wholly destroys. For this self-willed Religion, consisting in their own private Thoughts, and singular Apprehensions, or Fancies, 'tis impossible but that those who want the true Knowledge of the Gospel, and Soundness of Mind, or a good Judgment; and who possibly have too great an Opinion of their own Attainments, should take their own Imaginations, for the Motions of God's Holy Spirit.

[There

[There is no true Holiness without Humility; nor true Humility without Holiness. The more holy any Man is, he is so much the more humble too. Our Blessed L O R D was perfectly Holy, and perfectly Humble.]

We can never do too much for our God, who is the Author of all good to us: Nor can we be too holy here, unless we fear being too happy hereafter.]

[Solid Piety, or pure Religion, is always both sincere, and without Hypocrisy, and also founded on the clearest and strongest Reason: It fills the Mind and Heart with great and noble Views, and sets the Man far above the mean Fawnings, and little Fooleries, which make up the Religion of weak and superstitious Men.]

Those bad Men, who excuse their wicked Lives, by saying *Every Man hath his Failings*, should consider well, that there are

are some Failings through Ignorance, or Surprize, or Inadvertency, which God will not impute to those, who fear and love Him: But that all wilful, deliberate, known Sins, and more especially, all habitual, reigning Sins, are wholly inconsistent with true Piety. True Christians are ever careful, above all things, not to fall into such Sins; however, never to sleep in any one known Sin unrepented of, and not most seriously resolved against: And those who go on to commit such Sins, are no true Christians. From whence it evidently follows, that though all Men are Sinners in some Degree, yet some of those Sinners will certainly be saved, and others will as certainly be lost for ever.

[The Faith which the Gospel requires, consists in believing on JESUS CHRIST, and in owning Him to be the Son of GOD, and the Saviour of the World; in embracing

ing his Doctrine as true, and making open Profession of his Religion, upon all just Occasions ; in obeying his Commands, and depending wholly upon Him for Salvation. He who thus doth, hath a Right to trust in the Mercy and Promises of God in CHRIST : But a strong Imagination, or a fond Persuasion of his being a Child of God, and a Reliance on the Merits of CHRIST, without obeying Him, will never save any Man.

[As nothing in the World is so important as Religion, and no Interest can possibly be so great, as that of eternal Happiness ; so 'tis as certain, that this Happiness cannot be otherwise obtain'd, than by a constant and diligent Observation of the Duties of our holy Religion. And a Man may be as certainly lost for ever, by wilful Ignorance of his Duty, and want of Care of his Soul ; by Indevo-
tion,

tion, and by a worldly and sensual Course of Life, as by those notorious and enormous Crimes, which inevitably drown Men in Perdition.

[True Piety doth not only make us abhor all known, wilful, crying Sins ; but by rectifying our Judgments, and directing our Passions to their proper Objects, it fills the Soul with every Christian Grace and Virtue ; with the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, of Justice and Mercy ; with Mildness, and Humility, and Patience, and with an entire Resignation to the Will of God ; with Trust on Him, and with a settled, calm Tranquillity of Mind in all Events.

[The first, or principal Quality of a wise, considerate Christian is, to be truly reasonable, or to have a right Judgment enlightened and directed by the Gospel of CHRIST. For how can a Man, who wants good Sense and Discretion, judge

aright of spiritual Matters ? How can he resist and govern his Passions, or get rid of his Prejudices, and comply in all things with his Duty ?

The best Thing we can do for our Children is, to teach them early to make a true Judgment of what they are most nearly concerned to know, and to practise, And then to persuade, and accustom them, all we can, to govern themselves by that right Reason, and good Sense, without which they must be Fools, and miserable, even here, (as well as hereafter) in all the greatest outward Advantages this World can afford them.

[The false Notions, and the wrong Measures, Men take up in their younger Years, to judge of things by their outward Appearances only ; to determine rashly, and at hap-hazard, without due Regard to the Consequences of things ; to govern themselves wholly

wholly by their Senses, and their Passions, by their Prejudices, and by their inordinate Love of the World, or of sensible and perishing things, which follows from these weak and erroneous Principles, are the most usual Causes of Infidelity and Irreligion.

[A groundless Security, or a false Opinion of Mens being in a good State, in order to the next World, without a due careful Compliance with the Terms of the Gospel, is as certainly damnable, and hath damned many more foolish, unthinking Men, than Despair of God's Mercy ever did, or ever will do.

Nothing can be more directly contrary to the plain Precepts, and to the main Design of the Gospel, than that apparently and entirely worldly; that carnal and sensual Life, in which such vast Numbers of Christians (so called) are engaged. Their whole Time

is spent in the Care of their Bodies, and of the Things of this World; in Idleness, Dressing, Plays, and impertinent Visits, made only to get rid of so much Time; in Pleasures and Diversions, or unprofitable Amusements, which are the whole Busines of their Lives: In a Word, *In making Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

Have these Men, and these Women any Souls to save? Or, have they Folly enough to think, they can be saved, if the Gospel be true, and C H R I S T came to save those only, who believe and obey Him, *i. e.* Who seek the Kingdom of GOD, in the first Place; and who make it their first and chief Busines to serve, to honour, and to please GOD in all things.

[He deserves not the Name of a Christian, who hath not Courage enough to obey GOD in every Instance of his Duty, how contrary soever it may be to the most received

ceived Customs, and current Maxims of the World : Though that Custom, and those Maxims, are supported by Numbers of the most distinguished Persons, whether for high Station, or Birth, or for Riches, or Learning, or worldly Wisdom. To that weak Reason, of doing any ill thing, because 'tis the general Custom, and every one else doth so ; one of the Antients wisely answers, " 'Tis the " Custom also to go to Hell in that " broad Way that leads thither."

[Impurity, which is excited and encouraged by loose Plays, and Songs, and Romances, is commonly the first Vice and Passion, which betrays weak and inconsiderate young Persons, and engages them in a Course of Sin, which usually lasts as long as their Lives. That Love which is the Subject of our modern Plays, and Romances, and fashionable Songs, and lewd Books, is, in Truth, that

unholy, inordinate, sensual Passion, which the Gospel commands us to abhor, and to stifle its very first Motions. What passes for good Breeding, and agreeable Conversation and Address, and innocent Gallantry, between Persons of different Sexes, often makes way for, and ends in those horrible Crimes, those Works of the Flesh, which destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.

[All Persons being governed by Sense alone, in the first Part of their Lives, that natural strong Inclination to the Pleasures of the Body, which is the Source of all the Sins of that Nature, is the most predominant Passion of Youth. All possible Care therefore ought to be taken, to establish early in all young Persons, all the great fundamental Principles of the Christian Religion; and a Sense of the Necessity of that Holiness and Purity of Heart and Life, which

which the Gospel so expressly obliges us to.

And especially we ought most diligently to imprint upon their Minds, such an awful, perpetual, incessant Regard to Almighty GOD, and to his Omnipresence, that a lively Sense of their being always, and in all Places, under his Inspection, may, by his Grace, preserve and secure their Innocency and Purity, in that most dangerous Part of Life, (as hath been well observed by an eminent Divine) from *fifteen* or *sixteen* Years to *twenty*; when coming into the World, and being usually left to their own Management, in some measure, they are, through the Weakness of their Reason, and the Strength and Violence of their bodily Passions, more liable to sensual Impressions, and irregular Desires.

And consequently, they are hardly to be restrained from Folly

and Sin, otherwise than by a frequent, actual Reflection (which ought ever to be made by them inviolably in the Hour of Temptation) upon that All-seeing Eye, which then, at that time, observes all their Ways, and even the most secret Thoughts of their Hearts ; and the most carefully-concealed Transgressions of any of his holy Laws.

[That important Consideration which St. Paul proposes, *1 Cor. vi. 19.* (viz.) *That our Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in us, which we have of GOD,* is a most irrefragable, irresistible Argument against not only all those detestable Crimes, and Horrors of Impurity, which are not to be named among Christians ; but also against suffering even the first Motions and Inclinations, or Tendencies that Way, to lodge, or take place one Minute in our Hearts. We must rid our Minds of

of all such Fuel of those Flames, which may otherwise burn down to Hell, with as much Haste and Fear, or Afright at them, as we would throw a burning Coal off from our Flesh.

For even such unholy Thoughts indulged, or but suffered without Abhorrence, drive away that HOLY SPIRIT, that Spirit of Wisdom and of a sound Mind, which dwells only in those who are pure in Heart, to illuminate and direct, and govern them ; to sanctify and dedicate them wholly, both Soul and Body, to the Service of GOD.

To this same Purpose, the Apostle farther argues, that we being *bought with a Price*, the precious Blood of the Son of GOD, we are not our own, ver. 20, but both our Body and our Spirit are his, without Reserve. We must therefore glorify GOD in both, not profaning and defiling his Temple, which he who doth, GOD will him destroy.

[Mortification, or a due Subjection of our bodily carnal Appetites, to our Spirits or Minds; and great Moderation in the Use of things permitted; and all those wise and important Considerations of the Will and Laws of GOD; of the Dignity of our Nature, as we are exalted above the whole visible Creation; and higher yet, as we are Members of CHRIST's mystical Body; and deep and frequent Thoughts on Hell, and on Heaven, on all Occasions, and Temptations to these Sins, most evidently tend to maintain an exact Purity both of Soul and Body.

All these Means and Thoughts therefore are not only highly expedient, but absolutely necessary to keep us from becoming Slaves to sensual Pleasures; and to form our Minds to that over-powering Love of GOD, and those earnest, incessant Desires of heavenly things, which are the Foundation, and

and the Abridgment too, of all Christian Morals.

[All undue Compliance with the Allurements of the Objects of Sense ; and the inordinate Love of transitory things ; and all sinful, carnal Appetites, entertained in the Mind only, do wholly extinguish the Love of GOD, and all Desires after, and Relish of spiritual Joys. They can take no Pleasure in the Sense of GOD's Love to them, and in Hopes of living with Him, who have not early, constantly, or effectually, laboured to master that most general and vehement Inclination to the Gratification of the barely animal Life.

The thus denying our selves, *i.e.* all unlawful, carnal and worldly Lusts or Desires, and whatever renders our Minds sensual and earthly, averse from GOD, and prone to the Creature, is the first Lesson, and great Design of the Christian Religion :

Religion : And proportionable to our Care and Success herein will be our Proficiency in the Love of God, and in sincere Piety and Holiness of Heart and Life.

[The more Progress any one makes in Holiness, and the more Sense he hath of God's Goodness to him, in plucking him as a Brand out of the Fire, the more he abhors all Sin : And the more he accuses and detests his own former ill Courses, the more Hope he hath of Pardon, he is still the more sensible of the Danger he was in, of being lost for ever. In a Word, the more he reflects upon all that Debt, which God hath forgiven him, the more he loves God ; and the more he loves God, the more sensible he still is of the Folly and Ingratitude, as well as of the horrible Danger of having ever offended Him ; and having ever lived without God in the World, or not having had Him in all his Thoughts.

[The

[The only and sure Way never to commit any wilful, deliberate Sin is, to set God always before us. An actual Reflection that we are at that very Time, and in that Place, under his Eye and Observation, will best inform us, whether any secret Thought, or Design, or Action, be lawful or not. No Man certainly, who thus believes, and thus considers, can affront Almighty God to that Degree, as to do any thing in his Sight, from which the Presence of a Child, or of his meanest Servant, would restrain him. Nor can he indulge, or allow himself to entertain any Thought, which he will be ashamed to have known to all the Men in the World.

Not only those horrid, detestable Crimes, which provoked God to destroy whole Cities with that dreadful Judgment of Fire from Heaven; but all other Sins, which Decency forbids to mention, and which

which even those who are guilty of them are most ashamed to own, (unless they are given over to a reprobate Mind) will be the more severely punished in the next World by a righteous Judge; because being known to God only, and to themselves, they oftentimes escape all Punishment, even so much as Disgrace in this Life.

[He who takes that Care which he ought, never to say any thing in the Day, of which he may have Reason to repent at Night, never talks a great deal, unless it be with a Prospect of doing Honour to God, or some good to those who hear him.

[Never to prefer a less Good to a greater; nor to choose a greater Evil before a less, are fundamental Maxims of Wisdom; but are observed only in the Christian Religion. For worldly Wisdom teaches Men to prefer the Pleasures, Riches, and Honours of this short

short Life, to endless Happiness in the next; that is, to prefer the Creature to the Creator, and the World, to that God who made it; and to choose to be miserable to all Eternity, rather than to curb their vicious Inclinations, and to deny all worldly and carnal Lusts for the short time of this Life.

[This we may depend upon as a sure Principle, That whatever is essential in the Christian Religion, and necessary to our Salvation, is always clear, evident, and easy to be understood, by all sincere and honest Minds; and whatever is obscure, and hard to be understood, is not necessary.

[These general Truths, That there is a GOD, who made the World; that the Holy Scriptures are his Word; and that all which we there find, concerning another Life, is most certain, ought to be settled in our Minds, by serious repeated Thoughts, and due Consideration,

sideration, as the Foundation of all true Religion.

Faith, or Belief, is a Persuasion of the Truth of a thing ; and no Man can be persuaded of the Truth of any thing of Concern to him, unless he hath considered it. Is it possible that any Man can live in any sinful Course ; that he can make Conscience of nothing ; that he can break GOD's Laws every Moment, if he had so far considered, as to be fully persuaded that *There is a GOD*, who sees and observes all his Ways ; and who will eternally punish him for the Affront done to his Majesty, by so despicable a Creature, who flights the Authority of his Maker or Judge, and dares provoke Him to his Face ?

All those therefore, who pretend to believe that there is a GOD, and a Judgment to come ; and yet live as if they were sure there were neither, give themselves

selves the Lye, and have less Faith than the very Devils.

[The Degree of Mens Piety answers to that of their Faith ; where there is no true Faith, there is no true Piety : Where Mens Faith is little, languid, and weak, their Religion is deficient, and next to none. And this is the too general Character of the Christians of this loose and deplorable Age, either downright Atheism, Scepticism, and Impiety ; or a poor, weak, an imperfect, unavailable Faith ; or rather, a confused general Opinion only, and a kind of an Half belief of the Gospel : They do not heartily believe it is true ; but rather, they are afraid that it should prove so.

Too many of those, who have a competent speculative Knowledge of the Christian Religion, take not due care to apply that Knowledge to the Sanctification of their Natures, and to the Reformation

formation of their Lives, which is indeed the proper End, and that true Use which they ought chiefly to make of that Knowledge. These unconsidering learned Fools, putting the glorious Light of the Gospel (which should guide their Feet into the Way of Peace) as it were under a Bushel, choose still to sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death ; whose Condemnation will be the greater, for their not doing what they so well knew to be the Will of their Lord.

[Nothing can more nearly concern any Man, than to study, and to know himself well. To this End, he must impartially examine the State of his own Soul ; he must make frequent and deep Reflections, not only upon his Actions and Words, but upon the usual Bent of his Thoughts, and inward Motions and Inclinations of his Heart. He must consider, what it is which he ought chiefly to.

to aim at, upon the Principles of the Christian Religion; and what Course he takes to obtain that End, for which he was made, (viz.) to be Holy in this Life, and Happy for ever! i. e. Whether he carefully and steadily walks in the narrow Way, which leads to Life eternally, and lives after the Spirit, not after the Fleshe and the world. By this Knowledge of ourselves, and thus deliberately stating with our own Consciences what is our main Design, and what we make the most important Affair of our Lives; whether we serve God or Mammon; that God who made us, and our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath bought us, or the God of this World, who blinds the Eyes of the Children of Disobedience (i. e. whether we make it our chief Business to know, and to do the Will of our LORD; or content ourselves with a bare outward Profession, and a Form of Godliness, without the

the Power of it, without being led by the Spirit, and governed by the Laws of GOD;) we may hereby best judge, whether we are in the Spirit, or in the Flesh; whether we are in a State of Grace, and of Salvation, or no, upon the Terms of the Gospel.

[Those Half-Christians, who live without frequent and serious Reflections made upon their own Conduct, in relation to their future State of endless Happiness or Misery, are unfaithful to their own Souls, as well as to their GOD, and to their Redeemer: And generally (unless they are given over by GOD to a reprobate Mind) they live and die in that fatal Security, of hoping well of their Condition, in a plain Contradiction to the Gospel of CHRIST, whilst they still go on in that broad Way which leads Millions to Destruction, and perish for ever in the Greatness of their Folly.

[To

[To do all things to the Glory of GOD, as St. Paul exhorts, 1 Cor. x. 31. implies a general sincere Intention, to procure and to promote the Honour of GOD upon all Occasions: In order whereto, we must take great Care to have GOD always in our Thoughts, when we address to Him in Prayer, Praises, &c. We must accustom our selves to have Him often in our Minds, and to make due Reflections upon our own Conduct, how we discharge the Duty we owe Him, upon Account of our Dependence upon Him, and of the Blessings we receive from Him, and of the Right He hath to our Love and Obedience: We must use our Liberty in things indifferent, with a particular Regard to the Edification, or at least, the not giving Scandal to our Brother: And 'tis in relation hereto that St. Paul here gives this Precept.

In short, to do all things to the Glory of God, is to manifest, in the general Course of our Lives, that we do love Him above all things ; and that we make it our principal Aim and Business to obey and serve Him ; owning Him in our open publick Worship, and in all Instances of our Duty, for our Lord and Master; and in setting forward the Salvation of our own Souls, and of the Souls of all other Men, to the utmost of our Power.

[We can never carry true Piety too far, nor do too much for God, and in Discharge of the Duty we owe to Him. And this Piety being sincere, and deeply rooted in the Heart, and also founded on the clearest and highest Reason, secures us from the great Sin of Hypocrisy, on the one hand, and from the Weakness and Folly of Superstition, on the other.

[That St. Paul in those Words,
1 Tim. i. 15. Jesus CHRIST
came

came into the World to save Sinners, of whom I am chief, did, in great Humility affirm, that he was the greatest of all Sinners, seems, to a very eminent and judicious Author, neither to agree with the Scope of those Words, nor with Truth, or Piety, or with good Sense. He only says, that he was the *first*, or one of the *first*, among those Sinners CHRIST came to save; to which Purpose he explains himself, ver. 16. *I obtained Mercy, that in me first* (it is the same Word in the Original, which is render'd *Chief*, ver. 15.) *JESUS CHRIST might show forth all Long-suffering, for a Pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to Life everlasting.*

No sincere Christian therefore is hence warranted, (much less obliged, to believe himself to be the greatest of all Sinners; but he rather ought to thank God for the Grace he gives him, to serve and to

to please Him in Newness of Life.

[When a Man once makes himself a Slave to the false Opinions and irreligious Customs of worldly and profane Men, there is no Wickedness which he may not soon fall into. When he thus submits his Judgment and Conscience to the vilest, and most ignorant and stupid, (because the most wicked Part of Mankind) and hath not Courage enough to do his Duty, even in those Instances which are most opposite to the Maxims and Practice of the great, the noble, and wise Men of the World, he soon proceeds with them to make shipwreck of all Faith, and all good Conscience.

[He who hath not Wisdom and Firmness enough to own himself a Disciple of the Blessed JESUS, by his resolved Obedience to all his Commands, in all Cases, abandons not only his Religion, but his Reason

Reason too ; since he apparently pays more Regard to the weakest and worst of Men, than to the wisest and best of all Beings ; and he exposes himself to that most dreadful of all Miseries (*viz.*) to be denied before GOD, and his holy Angels, by that Saviour of the World, whom he is thus ashamed to own before Men, to be his LORD and Master.

'Tis the greatest Affront we can put upon our LORD, and his Grace, to say, that his coming into the World, his Death, his Gospel, his Spirit, have not Power enough to sanctify us, and to enable us to do what He commands us.

[The chief and highest, or sovereign Good, and the truest and everlasting Pleasure, are to be found only in GOD ; and therefore we ought to make Him the Object of our most ardent Love, *i. e.* to love Him above all other things.

God made Man for Himself, and gave him being, that he might be eternally with Himself; designing him the most divine Employment of his own Eternity, (that is) the Knowledge and Love of Himself.

Union and Conformity to the Divine Will, and the accomplishing it on all Occasions, with Exactness and Truth, is that which is most desirable in this Life.

[The great Mystery of Christianity, is the perfecting of the humane Nature, by the Participation of the Divine Nature.

The Kingdom of God is the Empire of Divine Love: It is that State of the Soul, whereby a Man loves God with all his Heart, and with all his Soul, and his Neighbour as himself. It is the Rule of the Spirit of God in the Soul of Man.

[All Speculation is vain, that tends not to the Practice of some Duty. The

The highest Joy of the Soul of Man is, in keeping her self in strict Union with her GOD.

Seraphick Love, is that Love of GOD which is the Effect of an intense Contemplation of Him, (that is) of an habitual, attentive, and steady Application, or Conversion of the Spirit to GOD, and his divine Perfections.

The Love of Man to GOD, is the Complacency of his Will in the whole Will of GOD.

GOD inflames the Soul of a contemplative Man with his Love; so that by contemplating GOD, it loves Him; by loving Him, it enjoys Him; by enjoying Him, it rests in Him; and in this perfect Rest consists that Happiness, which Man in this Life can attain unto.

[He that thinks that he has attained his End, gives over pursuing it; and begins to lose by his Pride what was conferred upon him by Grace.

We must take Heed that we do not at any time, under any Pretence whatsoever, relax the Mind from Mortification, as if we had acquired such a firm State of Perfection, as that there were no Danger of falling from it. We must fear as long as we live. That Disposition which introduced the Form, is that which must nourish and preserve it. Therefore if Mortification begat holy Love, without doubt it must be continued even to Death.

[He is unworthy of God's Favour, that cannot think It Happiness enough without the World's.

Inward real Righteousness, or true Holiness, is a divine or godlike Nature, causing an hearty Approbation of, and an affectionate Compliance with, the eternal Laws of Righteousness, and a Behaviour agreeable to the essential and immutable Differences of Good and Evil.

There

There is no sweeter Pleasure than to converse with GOD ; nor greater Profit than to gain his Favour.

[Religion is the Perfection of Man, the Improvement and Accomplishment of that Part of him, wherein he resembles his Maker. 'Tis the Pursuance of his best and last End, and consequently his Happiness. Will he be no more happy than he is commanded ? Will he do no more than what will just serve to secure him from a miserable Eternity ? Is not Happiness desirable for it self ? Are we afraid of becoming too like GOD ?

[As the Love of GOD is the Sum of our Duty, so 'tis the Height of our Pleasure ; and were we not strange, unaccountable Creatures, it would be the Business of our Lives, and the End of all our Actions.

When we have resigned our

Wills to God, and thereby intrusted Him to will for us, all his Disposals of, and his Dispensations towards us, are, in effect, the Acts of our own Will, with the Advantage of being directed and specified by Him.

It is the Purity of the Soul, thro' Regeneration, that enables her to behold the Beauty of Holiness, and to see God. There is no seeing God, but by being purified and regenerated into his Image.

Grace is the supernatural over-powering Operation of God's Spirit.

[Whosoever has CHRIST for his Friend, shall be sure of good Counsel; and whosoever is his own Friend, will be sure to obey it.

It is the worst Husbandry in the World, to be damned to save Charges.

Self-Examination is the very Root and Ground-work of all true Repentance; and the necessary

Ante-

Antecedent, if not also the direct Cause, under GOD, of a Sinner's Return to GOD.

[Religion is, in its Essence, an inward and spiritual Holiness. Outward Actions are religious only, as they are either the Means and Instruments, or as they are the Fruits and Effects of Holiness.

Every true Christian is the Temple of the HOLY SPIRIT, the Child of the living GOD, the Child of Light, the Purchase of the Blood of CHRIST, the Delight of GOD, and the Care of Angels.

[We can find no Rest but in CHRIST, and in that Poverty of Spirit, and that Purity of Heart, of which He was Himself the great Example.

As GOD is the Fountain of all our Happiness, so He must be the chief Object of our Love, and the Centre of our Desires and Hopes.

[Wisdom is an habitual Skill, or Faculty of judging aright con-

cerning Matters of Practice ; and choosing according to that right Judgment, and conforming the Actions to such good Choice.

God doth impart the Knowledge of Himself to Man, according to the Proportion of Purity that is in every Man.

Religion makes God our Friend, a Friend infinitely better than all Friends ; and it rendereth a Man a true Friend, and a good Companion to himself.

[Frequent Converse with God begetteth a particular Acquaintance with Him, a mindful Regard of Him, a hearty Liking to Him, a delightful Taste of his Goodness, a sincere and solid good Will toward Him ; but if we seldom come at God, we shall little know Him, not much care for Him, scarce remember Him, be insensible of his Love, and regardless of his Favour ; a Coldness, a Shyness, a Distaste, an Antipathy toward Him,

Him, will, by degrees, creep upon us. The Beginning of all Good, is the true Knowledge of God; for it is impossible to love Him without knowing Him; therefore such Knowledge as we have of Him, such will our Love be to Him.

[Whosoever desires not to love the divine Goodness more, loves Him not enough.]

When we fear to offend God, because that He being our good Father, we owe Him Honour, Respect, and Obedience, then our Fear is filial.

It is an excellent and transcendent Privilege of Mankind, to be created to enjoy eternally an infinite Good, and to have some Participation of it during this Life.

Religion is the chief, the prime of all moral Virtues, referring all the other Virtues to the Honour of God.

Pride is the Heart of the old Man, which first lives, and last dies.

Grace is that divine Assistance, whereby we are disposed and enabled to keep God's Commandments, and to lead good and Christian Lives.

[The Lord JESUS CHRIST, who knew how to refuse the Evil, and to choose the Good, chose to live a Life of Meanness and Poverty.

To live, in a moral Sense, is to know, and to contemplate, to love and to pursue that which is the true Good of Man.

Christian Liberty is a Subjection to Reason, enlightened by Revelation.

True Perfection does not consist so much in a present Fervour of Devotion, and Love to God, as in an uniform and constant adhering to God by a holy Life.

[We are careful to have every thing we possess the best in its kind, except our own Souls.

Grace is the most lovely thing in the World, next to God himself, as

as being the Image of God stamp'd upon the Soul ; nay, it is not only the Image and Representation, but it is the Influence and Communication of Himself to us.

[There is nothing which we ought to beg of God with more Fervour, than the Grace to love Him ; for it is to the Faithful a Pledge that God loves them ; it is the first Effect of Faith, the most express Image of God, the most lively Mark of the Children of God ; it is the Soul of other Virtues, the Rule of our Actions, and the Sum of the Law.

To live a Christian Life, is to live like God ; not to aim at less than to be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect ; it is to be elevated above Man's natural Condition, to practise a divine and a supernatural Life ; to be guided by the Light of the divine Reason, and the Maxims of Faith, which confound those of the Wisdom of the

Flesh :

Flesh : 'Tis to live according to the Sentiments of JESUS CHRIST, in very great Disengagement from every thing but GOD.

[The Idea of Perfection is agreeable even to the most imperfect ; it is the Practice of it only that displeases them.

To live for, or to GOD, is to have no other Design, no other Will nor Intention, than to glorify Him in all that we do.

It is very strange, that all Men should love themselves above all the World, and yet that very few can endure to be long by themselves ; and that their dear selves should be so wearisome to themselves, that they can scarce bear their own Conversation for an Hour together.

The Abuses of common outward Blessings, such as Riches, Honour, Beauty, Wit, and the like, are more to be pitied, than the Want of them.

[Faith

[Faith has so many Mysteries to contemplate, and Virtue so many Duties to practise, that we can have no Pretence for Leisure for idle Thoughts, and to make our Lives shorter by the irreparable Loss of Time.]

If you love JESUS CHRIST, be sure that He loves you; and that He will not lose the Soul which He hath redeemed with his Blood, and enlivened with his Grace, and his Spirit.

GOD made us for his Glory, that is, that we should know, love, serve, and obey Him.

Poverty of Spirit is a State of the Mind, taken either in Opposition to Covetousness, or to Pride and High-mindedness.

[The grand Design intended in the Christian Religion was, to reduce straying Man to his true Good and Happiness; to sublimate, refine, and spiritualize his Nature; to loose him from the Cords of Vanity,

Vanity, and from his fast Adhesions to created good ; to disengage and separate him, not only from the World about him, but even from one Part of himself ; to raise him from the Earth to Heaven, not only by a local, but by a moral and mental Elevation.

The Design of the Christian Dispensation being to perfect Holiness ; to advance the Interest of the Divine Life ; to elevate us to the uttermost Degree of moral Perfection, which our Nature is here capable of ; and so far as is possible to make us Partakers of the divine Nature ; it is inconsistent with the End of such a Dispensation, to seek Rest and Happiness in things more ignoble than our selves ; and to grow one, as it were, with the dirty Planet, upon which we live and tread.

[To be a Sinner is a farther Remove from God, than to be nothing ; since it is not only negatively,

tively, but contrarily opposite to Him.

Sin is the greatest Monstrosity and Deformity in the World ; it is the only thing which God hates.

As Pride is the most uneasy thing in the World, so it is withal the most odious ; 'tis uneasy to the Patient, and odious to the Observer ; and it is the Parent of many troublesome and uneasy Passions. But to be humble, is to be wise ; to be serene, to be contented ; to be thankful, to be pleasant and cheerful ; to be calm and untroubled, to be dispassionate and unconcerned.

Joy is the Reward of a good Conscience, the Prerogative of Innocence, and the peculiar Right of good Men ; and they not only may be joyful and cheerful, but are also commanded to be so.

[The Man that does not propose to himself a good End, lives backward ; and the longer he lives, and the more active and busy he is,

is, the more he is led out of the Way, and the further he is from his Journey's End.

Unrighteous and rash Judgment or Censoriousness, argues that we are full of Envy, Pride, Malice, and Prejudice ; that we love to dwell upon Sores and Deformities ; that we take a secret Pleasure in the Follies and Infirmities of Mankind, and grieve at that whereat the Angels rejoice, namely, the wise Behaviour and good Order of Men ; all which is inhumane and diabolical.

[To walk with God, and to keep a constant Communication with Heaven, must needs be the sweetest, as well as the noblest and most worthy Entertainment on this Side of it.

There is no other Truth necessary to be made the Object of humane Study, but only that which servest to the moral Conduct of Man, to the Recollection of his Mind, to

to the Government of his Passions; and to the Direction of his Life and Manners, in such a Way as may lead him to eternal Happiness.

The more we contemplate GOD, the more we shall love and desire Him; and the more we desire Him, the more our Thoughts will concenter on Him; and this will recollect and simplify our Souls, and free us from that Distraction of Mind, and that Dispersion of Thought, which is so great an Hindrance to us in the Offices of our Devotion.

[The Perfection of the Soul is her Union with GOD by an Union of Wills, and is no other than the Love of GOD.

All things were made for GOD, as well as by Him; and He is the chief End and Object of the Will, which was made only for GOD, and the Love of Him; and is then consequently in her greatest Perfection, when employ'd in the Love of

of Him that made her, and for whom she was made.

God courts and importunes us that we would be happy, and that we would take such a Course as will make us so ; that we would live and act wisely, and like rational Creatures, according to the Order of our being, and the Perfection of our Nature ; that we would fit and dispose our selves for the Happiness He has provided for us ; that we would bring our selves within the Compass of his Love and Mercy ; and so demean our selves in our short Time here, that He may reward us with a blessed Eternity.

[Religion is the Glory of our Natures, the End of our Beings, the noblest Object of our Thoughts, the greatest Concernment of our Lives, and the best Employment of our Tongues : And to talk of doing or receiving any Good thereby, is a Duty which every Man owes.]

owes to himself, to his Neighbour, and to his God. It is a Denial of God to place one's End in any Creature, whether the Creature be one's self, or any other Being. He that makes himself his End, that centers and terminates in himself, that refers all things to himself, and measures all things by the Relation which they have to his own private personal Interest, is a Denier of God to purpose, and holds one of the first Ranks of practical Atheism. And so the Man that places his End in any of the Creatures without him, in sensible and temporal Objects, is a very gross Denier of God, as deifying and idolizing those little empty things, upon which he thus rests and reposes himself.

[Of all the Methods of Improvement that can be used, there is none so advantageous as Thinking, either for our Intellectuals,

or

or our Morals, to make us wiser, or to make us better Men. [The moral Union between God and the Soul, is an Union of our Wills with God's Will, and is no other than the Love of God; and he that loves God most, is united to Him most. This moral Union of the Soul with God, will never be compleated in this World, where, as we know but in part, so we love but in part, and so are but partially united to God.]

[The Way to live much, is to begin to live well betimes, and to pursue that Design with great Vigour and Application. Folly and Vice do much lessen, and take off from true Life.]

[Consideration is half Conversion; and a considerate Person is not far, nor is like to be long, from the Kingdom of Heaven.]

Holiness is the Name, the Will, the Work, the Image, the Nature, and the Glory of God.

Prayers,

Prayers, Penances, and the Mortification of the Flesh, are but the Outsides of true Repentance ; the Hatred of Sin is the Essence and Spirit of it.

[When Man is united to God, he is at his Centre, and so it is natural for him to be in Tranquillity. Without Rest there is no true Happiness, and without God there is no true Rest for Man.

Man, by his Degeneracy, is become a most disordered and rebellious Creature, contesting with, and opposing his Maker; as He is the first Cause, by Self-dependence; as he is the chiefest Good, by Self-love; as He is the highest LORD, by Self-will; and as He is the last End, by Self-seeking : But by Regeneration the disordered Soul is set right again ; Sanctification being the Renovation of the Soul after the Image of God, in which Self-dependence is removed by Faith; Self-love, by Love of God; Self-

Self-will, by Subjection and Obedience to the Will of God; and Self-seeking, by Self-denial.

[An early Preparation for Death, delivers us betimes from the Fears of Death, and consequently from most other Fears; and it supports us under all the Troubles and Calamities of this Life.]

He lives most who improves the Grace of God to make himself most fit for Heaven, and best qualified for the greatest Rewards; who knows God most, and worships Him in the most perfect Manner; who lives most above this World, in the Exercises of the most divine Virtues, who does most Service to God in the World, and improves all his Talents to the best Advantage; who most adorns and perfects his own Mind, brings most Glory to God, and does most Good to Men.

If we would live a great while in this World, we must begin to live

live betimes; we must have a Care of all Interruptions and Intermissions of Life; we must live apace, that is, do all the Good we can.

[He who resolves to repent, but does not resolve to repent present-ly, tho' he is sure of no other Time but the present to repent in, does not sincerely resolve to repent, but only resolves to delay his Repen-tance, and not to repent now; and probably may never do it till 'tis too late to do him any good.

Since CHRIST came from Hea-ven to declare the Will of GOD, and has put the holy Scriptures into our Hands, which are the per-fect Rule of Life and Manners, and hath furnished us with all the Advantages to increase in Know-ledge, it is as dangerous a thing to be willingly ignorant of the Gospel, as it is to dis obey it.

[Our Likeness to GOD consists only in the Conformity of our Wills, and of our Affections to Him,

Him, and in our Imitation of Him ; for it is only a Spirit that can be like to a Spirit.

The Devil sells Men nothing, but at the Price of their Souls.

Whosoever seeks any thing to make him happy, but God, and the Good of his own Soul, shall find nothing but Vanity, Misery, and Sorrow.

To love, is to will Good to one, and in God, to will and to do is the same thing ; therefore God is good, and doth Good to those whom he loves.

Seeing that God is infinitely great, nothing that pleases or displeases Him, is to be accounted little. In Good or Evil, there is no Littleness ; whatsoever is good, is great ; and whatsoever is evil, is not little.

[The Death of the Soul, which is the greatest Evil, and may be avoided, Men generally little fear, or are careful to avoid ; but the

Death

Death of the Body, which is, or may be no Evil, and is inevitable, all Men strive as long, and as much as they can, to escape.

The greatest and worst sort of Sacrilege is, to rob God of his Honour, by arrogating any Part of it to our own selves.

[The chief Use of Speech is the glorifying God, and the benefiting Men ; and this is the true Standard by which we are to weigh our Words, and the End we ought to aim at, and propound to our selves.

Passive Valour, or being able and ready to neglect and forgive all Affronts and Injuries, is as much the Mark of a great Mind, as the active, and perhaps more ; the latter being often owing to the animal, the other to the rational part of Man.

[Self-resignation, and Conformity to the divine Will, is the most excellent, the truest, and the most acceptable Way of glorifying God, and of doing Honour to Him.

Man's Happiness chiefly consists in his being transformed into the divine Image and Likeness ; in partaking of the divine Nature ; in having one Will with GOD ; and in being free to Obedience.

It costs Men usually much more to revenge Injuries, than to bear them.

If we would have the Fire of holy Love kindled in our Breasts, we must dwell very much in the Contemplation of the divine Excellencies, and of the divine Benefits.

It is for want of Thinking, that most Men are undone.

[Holy Love is a supernatural Quality, infus'd by GOD into the Soul of Man ; it is the chief of the Theological Virtues, and it is Happiness begun in this Life, and continued and perfected in the other.

He only is truly and perfectly amiable and desirable, in whom alone all things that are truly good

good are contained ; and by enjoying of whom, all good things are possessed.

All Desires that are not after the highest and unchangeable Good, are after that which is lowest and changeable ; and how can Rest be expected from that which is in continual Motion ?

[Longing Desires of the Soul after GOD are good, and fervent Aspirations are pleasing to Him ; but Tranquillity of Mind, and a total Acquiescence of the Will in his good Pleasure, are better, and more pleasing to Him.]

The devout Soul desires to see GOD in what Manner, and when He pleases ; but in the mean time it desires to love Him more, and in all things to conform to his Will.

[Then only is a Man happy in this World, when his Mind is elevated by Faith, and his Will enflamed with Love to GOD, then he is perfectly at Rest and Peace in GOD.]

He alone is happy, whose Desires are satisfied; and that is only he, who truly loves Him that is alone infinitely amiable.

We therefore are always obnoxious to manifold Imperfections, because we never abandon our own Wills, that we may altogether act in GOD's Strength, and resign our Wills to his Will.

[The Way of holy Love is the Abnegation of our own Will, and perfect Conformity to the Divine Will, according to the Example of our Lord and Master CHRIST, while He was upon the Earth, whose Meat and Drink it was to do the Will of his heavenly Father, even to his Life's End.

The Exercise of Conformity to the divine Will, consists in doing, speaking, and thinking nothing, which we do not know is agreeable to the Will of GOD, and in executing what we do so know, with Fidelity and Fervour, to the Glory of GOD. [In

[In the Beginning of a Man's Conversion to the Love of God, his Heart is affected with old contrary evil Habits, which are Obstacles to the pure Love of God ; and therefore he then feels in himself a turbulent Commotion, and a violent Contention, before they will give place to holy Love to exert it self ; but when the Flesh is subjected to the Spirit, no Contradiction is remaining in the Soul, then Love acts so quietly and calmly, that the Soul it self hardly perceives its Actions and Operations.

In holy Love there are two principal Acts ; namely, Vigor and Humiliation ; but the latter of these is preferable to the former ; for in a fervent Vigour there may be Deceit and Vain-glory ; but Humiliation is without any Fiction ; and such a Self-evacuation best qualifies the Soul for the Reception of God.

God is the Principle of holy

Love ; and our Love to Him, . is but the Effect of his Love to us.

The perfect Love of GOD works all other Loves out of the Soul ; it loves nothing with Him, but all things in Him, and Him above all things, and all things else for his Sake.

[All those that undertake the Exercise of Christian Virtues, without holy Love, labour long and hard, and make but little Progress in the Way of Perfection ; but those who love GOD fervently, in a short Time feel their Imperfections, as it were consumed in this holy Fire, and all Virtues habitually consummated by this holy Love.

The End of Prayer is Union with GOD by Love ; and the Effect of it is true Felicity.

The Way to pray without Distraction, and to contemplate with Delight, is to abstract the Heart from the eager Desire of every thing

thing but GOD, and to give it wholly to Him, to be possessed by Him.

[By forgetting eternal and heavenly things, and by meditating upon, speaking, minding, and often remembrance earthly things, divine Love is extinguished in the Heart, and the Love of the World is enkindled in it.

Those that speak much of, and think often on unprofitable things, never attain to the Perfection of Devotion ; but he only obtains perfect Union with GOD, who keeping his Tongue and his Thoughts under Restraint, with his Affections vigorously inclines to Him.

We are more obliged to CHRIST for his Love than for his Death, for that was the Cause and Motive that made Him undergo this : And GOD does more value our Love to Him, than all that we can do or suffer for Him ; for all that we can do or suffer, is but the Sign and Effect of our Love to Him. [It

[It is not the reading of spiritual Books, to the End to be instructed in the Doctrine of Perfection; but it is the Practice only, which effectually inclines the vagrant Will of Man to holy Love.

Who can but be inflamed with a holy Love to God, that considers his incomprehensible Goodness in willing the World, especially Mankind, out of nothing into Being; his Omnipotency, in creating that which he did so will; his Providence, which is able to govern all Creatures, so as to effect his designed End; his Immensity, which is every where; and his infinite Wisdom, in disposing all things in so amiable and wonderful Harmony.

[The Purgative, the Illuminative, and the Unitive Life, are not three Ways really different, but only several Modifications of the same thing, seeing that they are all truly radicated in Love; for true Love purges the unclean, enlightens

lightens the blind, and unites the separated.

Purgation, Illumination, and Union, cannot be wanting in him that truly loves God; for he always has something to be purified, he always aspires after more Knowledge, and he always desires to be more united with God.

In each State, the several Exercises of the other State are included. In the Purgative way, Light ministers to Purgation; in the Illuminative way, Love and Purity assist to the getting of Light and Virtue; in the Unitive way, Purity and Light promote the highest Love.

[They are far from Perfection, who falsely suppose, that they have perfectly attained the Purgative Life, and that they have quite gone through the Illuminative, and that they ought to be wholly exercised in the Unitive.

The Reason why so few love God

D 5 is,

is, because they have no Mind to love Him; nay, they will not love Him; for if they would love Him, what should hinder them? For God commands all to love Him that will not, and He helps those that will; what Excuse then can they have that do not love Him?

A truly pious and sincere Christian may know himself to be happy, and may be satisfied with the Assurance that he has, that he loves God, and that he is beloved of Him.

[Whosoever is possessed of this holy Love of God above all things, has therewith all Virtues, seeing all of them are rooted in this Love. For what is Obedience, but Love subjecting the Will? What is Humility, but Love humbling the Mind? What is Patience, but Love suffering all things? What is Faith, but Love begun and disposing to Grace? What is Hope, but Love in its Progress, and desiring to see its

its beloved ? What are all other Virtues, but Love exerting it self into so many several Instances ?

If we did love GOD as we all pretend, and as we ought, we would, and should mortify our Senses as to earthly things, and more contemplate heavenly things.

All People are apt to extol and please themselves in their own Way of worshipping GOD, and in their own spiritual Exercises; but he that serves GOD out of true Love to Him, serves Him in the best Way, whatsoever the Way and Exercises be.

[He only lives to GOD by Love who is dead to himself by Humility, and to the World, by Contempt of it.]

If Men did truly love GOD, as they profess, they would not seek their own Honour, nor desire vain Applause, nor boast of their own Excellencies as they do; but they would honour, and praise, and extol only GOD. All

All Virtues languish in the Soul, when Love languishes in the Will of Man ; as the Rivers cease to run when the Springs grow dry.

If Men knew how sweet, how delightful, how satisfactory the Love of GOD is, they would see, and deplore their own Misery, in not loving infinite Beauty, and infinite Goodness, more than they do.

[Holy Love is not to be purchased at a cheap rate ; it will cost us all we have ; it is infatiable, and never says, it has enough.

The Object of holy Love is of infinite Worth ; and therefore all that we can give for it, is far less than it deserves ; and the obtaining of it, will recompence infinitely beyond all we can give for it.

When we have loved GOD as much as we can, we fall short of GOD's Love to us ; for he loves us yet much more.

He that gives all to GOD, and reserves nothing to himself, gives nothing

nothing to GOD, and saves all to himself, and that for ever. book

[If any thing could possibly grieve GOD, nothing would do it so much as want of Love in Man; for He loving Men so much, as earnestly to desire to communicate himself to them, nothing can be more unreasonable, nor more contrary to his Mind, and gracious Design, than that Men should not have so much Love for Him, and for themselves, as to be willing to receive such infinite, beatifying, and endearing Pledges of his Love.]

GOD illuminates all Men with a sufficient Knowledge of Himself, to oblige them to love Him; but they will not open their Eyes, to see how amiable He is.

All Men are made and commanded to love GOD, but all Men are not inflamed with the Love of Him, because they are seduced by their Passions, and carnal Affections, to love vile and sensual Objects, better than,

than the supreme and transcendent Good, and the Author of their beings, and of all good to them.

[To die to our selves, to our corrupt Senses, to our unbridled Passions, to this deceitful World, are things soon and easily said, but long and hard to practise ; but are in Truth done only by those, who have a great and sincere Love for GOD.

They truly love GOD, who make all their Actions subservient to Him, and have no Will but His.

Holy Love ennobles and perfects good Works, which, as to the Matter of them, are but mean, and of little Value ; and great and glorious Works in shew are but contemptible, if they be undertaken and performed upon any other Principle, but this our Love to GOD.

[The greatest Love of the chiefest Good is Peace ; the inordinate Love of the Creature is War and DissentioN.

It

It is not to be wondred at, that God does not remarkably punish in this World, those that do not love Him ; for not to love Him is Misery more than enough.

Love to God makes Him certainly, easily, sweetly, and supernaturally present to him that loves Him.

Nothing but Sin extinguishes God's Love to us, nor makes Him absent from us.

[He loves God rightly, who does not bend his Mind from the Creator to the Creature.

He has attained to the Top of holy Love, and loves God perfectly, who, lifted up above all created things, contemplates God by naked Faith, and is delighted in Him by pure Love.

All Love is transforming ; the Love of God to Man, transformed Him into the Likeness of Man ; and the Love of Men to God, transforms Men into the Likeness of God,

[There

[There are three Ways whereby we may come to GOD; namely, Mortification, Contemplation, and divine Love; but the way of holy Love is the best, for that only transforms us into the Likeness of GOD.]

A Soul cannot be said to be united to GOD, but by the Habits of all Acts of Love; but principally by doing all things for GOD's Sake; and by always, with all its Might, aspiring to Him.

He that loves GOD perfectly, loves Him not only for his Goodness to us; but loves GOD, (if I may so say) as GOD loves himself, that is, for his own infinite Perfections.

Let us all then begin to live this seraphick Life here in this State, seeing our good GOD vouchsafes us this Privilege, upon which depends, and wherein consists, our present Repose, and our everlasting Consolation.

[We

[We must live by *Faith*, while we are in this World, as seeing Him who is invisible; and in this Life of *Faith* there is *Communion* with *God*, and the *Communion* of *Saints*.]

There is *Communion* with *God*, which consists in the *Addresses* which *God* makes unto us by his *Word*, and in the *Addresses* which we make unto *God* by our *Prayers*.

He that delights in *God*, delights in this *Communion* with *God*; and he that delights in this *Communion* with *God*, delights in *God*.

In every Exercise of this *Communion* with *God*, he appears to us as most *Lovely*, and most *Glorious*: And nothing can be more so, than the greatest Perfection of *Goodness*, directed by the greatest Perfection of *Wisdom*, and exercised by the greatest Perfection of *Power*.

[According to the Measure and
Pro-

Proportion of true *Goodness* in us, directed by the best of our *Understandings*, and exercised according to the utmost of our *Ability*; so is our *Resemblance of God*, and our Delight in Him.

In every part of God's Creation, there are astonishing Manifestations of his *Wisdom*, and gracious Communications of his *Favour*; and as we continually enjoy God by these, so we are obliged carefully to observe, and gratefully to acknowledge it.

[There is a secondary Communion with God, in the Communion of Saints; and as these are the living Images of God, so they which delight in them, delight in God: But none can unfeignedly and greatly delight in these, who are not of the Number of them; since none but *like* can delight in *like*, and love *like*.]

By this therefore we know we are the Children of God; because we

we delight in the Children of God as such.

[The Kingdom of God in Heaven, is like the Kingdom of God on Earth; and the *Happiness* of Men, is of the same Nature as their *Religion*.

In both there is the *Contemplation* of God, according to the Manifestations of his *Glory*; and the *Imitation* of God, according to the Manifestation of his *Holiness*.

The *Manifestations* of the *Glory* and the *Goodness* of God, are *divers*, as to Kind, and as to Degree, in Heaven, and in Earth; and the Proportion of Delight, arising from the *Contemplation* and *Imitation* of God, in either State, is accordingly *divers*.

[The *Happiness* of those who are religious, is begun in this Life, and is perfected in the next: Both that *Happiness* which is *Subjective*, and that which is *Objective*. *Subjective*, i. e. That which ariseth from

from what is *within* us, or from what we are: *Objective*, i.e. That which ariseth from what is *without*, or from what we have.

The religious Person is more perfect in Heaven than on Earth, both in a natural and in a spiritual Sense; for the animal *Body* is changed into a spiritual Body (the most perfect Mansion, and Instrument of the Soul;) the *Soul* itself is enlarged and exalted in its Faculties; (if no new Faculties do awaken in that glorious State.)

[The Company, the Employment, and the Entertainments, will be as peculiar and sublime as the Improvements, and much more so: We shall then, if we are truly righteous, be more Godlike, and equal to Angels; meet for that Society, and happy as they.

This Advancement towards Perfection, will be also constant and *progressive*; for every Creature that is capable of *Wisdom*, becomes wiser

wiser by more Study and Observation; and every Creature which is capable of *Holiness*, becomes better, and more holy, by the Practice, and Perseverance in Holiness.

[A reasonable Creature cannot but apprehend, that as it was not the Author of Being to it self, so it ought not principally to study the pleasing and serving of it self, but Him who gave it Being: That it can no more perfect it self unto Blessedness, than it could create it self; and must therefore respect its Creator, as the sovereign Authority it is to obey, the sovereign Good 'tis to enjoy, and to attend the Revelation of his Will concerning both these.

Gospel-Righteousness is a penitent Return to GOD by Faith and uniform Obedience, as to the supreme Authority, and the sovereign Good.

[The Soul can never attain the beatifick Vision of GOD, if not prepared

prepared thereto by a gradual previous Likeness. The Work of Grace is Glory begun.

Union with God, beside Relation, imports also Presence, not physical or local, (for so nothing can be nearer to God than it is) but moral and cordial, by which the Soul, with Will and Affections, guided by rectified Reason, and the Light of the Gospel, cleaves to God, as to its supreme Good, and only Happiness, and He with Love embraceth it.

[Most of our Sins are to be imputed not to meer Ignorance of our Duty, but to a drowsy Inadvertency, that we keep not our Spirits in a watchful, considering Posture at all Times.

How deplorable is their Case, who have no other Hope left them, but that the God of Truth will prove false, and overturn the Nature of Things, to save them in their Sins !

'Tis

'Tis amazing that the highest Excellency, the most perfect Beauty and Loveliness; nay, Love it self, should so little attract a reasonable spiritual Being, issued from thence. How unnatural is it so to disaffection one's own Original; how monstrous!

[A Respect to GOD specifies every Virtue and Duty. Whatever is loved and served, and not in Him and for Him, (as our last End) becomes an Idol, and that Love and Service is Idolatry.

An holy Disposition of Heart towards GOD, ought, in the first Place, to be endeavoured after, as having in it the highest Excellency and Equity, and being of most immediate Necessity to our Blessedness, and the Parent of all Virtues.

[A thorough prevailing Change from Sin to Gospel-Righteousness; determines a Man's Soul towards GOD; so that the Love of GOD becomes the governing Principle of

of his Life, and the Reason and Measure of his Actions. He in whom the Love of God hath not such Power and Rule, whatever his fainter Inclination may be, is an ungodly Man.

[An holy Soul's supreme Desire is, to see and to partake of the divine Glory ; to behold the Face of God, till his Likeness be transfused thro' all its Powers, and his entire Image perfectly formed in it. True Knowledge of God directly tends to Holiness, and that to Contentation. Doth he know God, that admires not so glorious a Majesty ; that subjects not himself to Him, accounting it his only great Concernment to please and serve Him ; that acknowledges Him not a sufficient Portion, a full, all-comprehending Good ; that sees not Reason to trust Him ? Hath he seen God, that loves Him not, and delights not in his Love ; that quits not all for Him ?

[Is

[Is it righteous or wise ; nay, is it not the Height of Sin and Folly, to forget the Author of thy Being ; never to enquire where is God thy Maker ; to estrange thyself from Him ; to worship the Creature more than the Creator ; to harden thy Heart against his Fear and Love ; to affront his Authority ; and to abuse his Mercy ; to defy his Justice ; to cross his Will to do thy own ; never to acknowledge his Goodness ; to impose upon his Patience ; to deny the Lord that bought thee ; to live in a constant Contradiction to the very Design of his dying ; to villify his Blood, and despise his Spirit ?]

[Without some Sight of God here, there's no seeing Him hereafter ; without some Likeness to Him now, none hereafter.]

They who are now too wise to mind so mean a Thing as Religion, will think themselves

E wretched

wretched, deplorable, stark Fools at last.

Christianity gets a Man nothing, if it procures not a better Spirit. It pretends to that only. Constant Self-inspection is necessary thereto.

[Nothing so answers the Gospel, as a Propension of Heart towards GOD, an earnest Desire of pleasing and enjoying Him, and of being like to Him. This is the Design of the Gospel.

A faint, slight, over-master'd Inclination, will not serve the turn: 'Tis a steady, prevalent, victorious Direction of the Heart towards GOD, and future Glory, in Comparison whereof thou despisest all temporal things, that must be thy (evidential) ground of Hope to enjoy it.

[To have GOD always in View, as the Director and End of all our Actions, to be ready to receive all Intimations of his Will, and as readily

readily to comply with them, is an Angelical Life.

Blessedness is connatural to that Soul that is filled with the Fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, &c. 'Tis a Paradise, a Garden of God, where he walks. The Soul that lacketh these, is a Desart, an Habitation for Devils; Infidelity, Hatred, and Contempt of God, Pride and Hypocrify, Envy, Wrath, Avarice, dwell therein.

[Be constantly intent upon spiritual Growth, mind it as a Design, make it your great daily Business: We too contentedly confine our selves within certain Limits, and aim not at spiritual Excellency.

A contented satisfy'd Spirit results from a growing Knowledge of God, and Conformity to Him. Be distinct and explicit in proposing this Content as an End. This is a real Acknowledgment of God, as our God, our highest sovereign Good.

[Our not most earnestly desiring eternal Bliss, proceeds from our Unbelief of it; whereby we give the Lye to the eternal Truth.

It argues a low, sordid Spirit, not to aim at all the Perfection we are capable of; we comply with the usurping God of the World, against our own Souls, whilst we remain without an ardent Desire of Heaven.

'Tis very unnatural to pursue a Good stated in thy Judgment as best in it self, and best for thee, with unproportionable, cold, and slothful Desires.

[Be restless till thou find thy self uncapable of being satisfy'd with any thing but divine Likeness, and Love of GOD.

Who that understands what that Name GOD imports, can value at so low a Rate, as we visibly do, the eternal Fruition of his Glory; and a present Sonship, the Pledge of that Hope? An Heir's Hopes form his Spirit and Deportment.

The few Thoughts we have of future Blessedness, and the little Joy we take in them, are very bad Signs, when yet Vanities throng in, and please us.

[Spiritual Delectation, or Delight in GOD, and the Interest we have in Him, is incumbent on a Christian, as an indispensable Duty. We may not extinguish or frustrate so considerable a Principle of the divine Life. 'Tis a Constitution of the divine Goodness and Wisdom, both to cherish his own, and to invite in Strangers to him.

A serious, rational, seasonable Exercise of Delight and Joy, is an integral Part in the Religion of Christians. The Pre-apprehensions of our future Blessedness, are a more considerable Matter of Joy, than any our present State affords: And without Relation whereto, we have no Matter of rational Joy at all.

Our Knowledge of GOD, and

our Conformity to Him, are both our Duty and our Blessedness; our Ignorance of Him, and our Unlikeness to Him, are both our Sin and our Misery.

[Glorifying God is the End of our Beings; we otherwise live here to no Purpose.

'Tis the Glory of a Christian, to live so much above the World, that nothing in it may make him either fond of Life, or weary of it.

A meer Desire of being with God, and of attaining that Perfection and Blessedness, which He hath engaged us in the Pursuit and Expectation of, is the only warrantable Inducement for us to desire to die. The desirable Temper here, is a complacential Submission to the divine Will, with a preponderating Inclination on our Part, towards our eternal Home, if God see good.

[If our Love to God be not supreme, 'tis none at all, or not such as

as can denominate us Lovers of Him. We love Earth better, while we care not to come nigh God. Where is our Love, Obedience, Joy, and Praise? The blessed Hour of Death should be expected not with Patience only, but with ravishing Joy.

They have nothing of the true Light and Impress of the Gospel now, nor are they ever like to attain to the Vision of the blessed Face of God, and the Impress of his Likeness hereafter, that desire it not above all things, and are not willing to quit all things else for it.

[Get the lovely Image of future Glory into thy Mind, keep it before thy Eyes, make it familiar to thy Thoughts; and see that thy Soul be enriched with that holy Rectitude, that Love of, and Likeness to God, which may dispose thee to, and fit thee for, that blessed State.

They who are sufficiently apprehensive of the worthy and important Ends they are capable of attaining, and are visibly designed for, ought to be seized with a noble Disdain of living beneath themselves, below the Dignity of their Nature, and the Bounty of their Creator.

Christian Religion hath the Beginning of the divine Life for its Principle; and the Perfection and eternal Perpetuation thereof; for its Scope and End, God made us principally for Himself, and for Ends to be compassed in the future State.

[Man being capable of acting for an End (and incapable of acting otherwise as a Man) is obliged, in Subordination to his Maker, to intend and pursue the proper End for which GOD made him.

Man's Capacity of a future State, and the whole Scope and Design of

of the Gospel of CHRIST, indispensably obliges him to intend, and seek after, endless Happiness, as his last End ; since it is impossible that a Man should know, that there is no such State, and more than highly probable, or rather most certain from Revelation that there is.

Whilst we terminate our Thoughts and Designs upon things only on this Side the Grave, and employ our Cares and Endeavours about even the most despicable of them, we live not to our Dishonour only, but to the Reproach of our Maker, as if He made us for no more worthy Ends.

Our whole Life must be such as becomes the Expectation of a future blessed State. Set your Faces as Persons designing for another and better World.

['Tis not just or ingenuous, in smaller and disputable Matters, to make our own Apprehensions a

Measure and Standard to others. They are aptest to do so, who have least studied the Matter, and have nothing but their ignorant Confidence to entitle them to the Dictator's Chair.

[Senfualists have abandoned the common Hope of all good Men ; and that they may have their Lot with Beasts in this World, fear not to have it with Devils in the other.

To make caring for the Body, and this present natural Life, our whole Busines, is a base unmanning of our selves ; as if a reasonable and immortal Spirit were created only to tend upon, and serve a brute Beast.

We should make it our principal Care and Busines to intend, to mind, and improve our Spirits, to adorn and cultivate our inward Man. To neglect our Spirits, is as vile a Slur as we can put upon our selves, and upon our holy Profession. We should study what will

will best qualify our Souls for the State we are going into.

[An earthly Mind, Love of this World, and Aversion from GOD; Pride, Disdain, Wrath, Envy, Malice, Admiration of our selves, Aptness to seek our own Things with Neglect of others, speak us unprepared to approach the Divine Presence, and fit Company for Devils, and apostate Spirits.

To have now much Conversation with GOD, who is the only full and permanent Good, best agrees with the Expectation of a State perfectly good and happy.

An ill Man's Soul's habitual Aversion to GOD, would not allow it to be happy in Him. Can we be happy in Him whom we do not love; or love Him whom he will not know, or be acquainted with Him? Such an Hope affronts the very Reason of Things, and the natural Tendency of our own Spirits. Can we hope for what we

we desire not, or are in habitual Disaffection to.

[We should live now in a cheerful pleasant Expectation of so great things after Death, as we cannot now conceive or apprehend. This only can, upon the best Terms, reconcile us to the Grave, that our greatest Hopes lie beyond it, and are not hazarded, but accomplished by Death !

Heaven consisting principally in perfect Holiness, and Communion with GOD, you cannot judge of your own Right to it by a surer and plainer Rule, than that eternal Blessedness shall be theirs, whose Hearts are truly bent and directed to it, and purified from Sensuality, Avarice, Pride, and Hypocrify, by the Faith and Grace of the Gospel.

[Power to do good is a dangerous Ability, unless we use it.

Let thy solitary Thoughts be profitable. View the Evidences of thy

thy Salvation, the State of thy Soul, the coming of CHRIST, thy own Mortality ; it will make thee humble and watchful.

That due Regard which we ought to have to the Wisdom and Providence of GOD, and that just Estimate we should always make of eternal good things, will best maintain the Tranquillity of our Minds in sad Accidents. A generous and noble Idea of GOD in our Souls, and a Sense of the Interest we have in Him, through the Mediation of our Blessed Redeemer, will, above all other Considerations, preserve our Quiet.

[He is a wise and happy Man, who is careful to avoid every idle Word ; who never spends an idle Day ; who doth most conscientiously affect the Labours of his Profession ; and at the same time despises the Gain of it, in Comparison with the Good he hopes to do therein.]

Without

Without a magnanimous Contempt of all worldly things, no Man can be truly great.

[The primary Intention of all the divine Law, is to regulate the inward Thoughts, and habitual Inclinations of the Soul, and to bring them into Subjection, and Conformity to the Will of GOD.

No Precept more conduces to the Quiet of our own Minds, to the Peace of the World, and to the true Dignity and Perfection of our Nature, than this of loving our Enemies.

Men, if truly humble, would turn the Edge of their Censure upon themselves. No Man but may find himself guilty of more Faults than he can reasonably suspect his Neighbour of.

Zealous declaiming against the supposed Faults of other Men, argues an unreasonable Degree of Self-conceit, and proud overlooking those Imperfections and Follies,

Follies, which may be found at Home.

[Did Men seriously consider, that their Title to eternal Life did depend upon the wise Management of a few Days here ; that the best are unprofitable Servants ; they would search more into their own Souls, rather than find Leisure to pry into, and condemn the Miscarriages of others.

A Man should pursue his own Advancement for no other End, but that he may be in a better Capacity to do Good in the World.

[The Business of Church Ministers being of so great Importance, as the Salvation of Men's Souls, whoever hinders the Success of their Endeavours in that Kind, may justly be esteemed a common Enemy to Mankind.

[These Duties (which are all of a natural Obligation) have a natural Efficacy upon the Mind, to clear its discerning Faculties, and

and make it capable of divine Knowledge, *viz.* Simplicity of Mind without Prejudice ; Purity of Heart and Affections ; Humility, Calmness of Temper, and Prayer.

To Purity of Heart may be reduced, a generous Contempt of the World ; a Freedom from all Ambition and Covetousness, the two great Causes of Infidelity and Heresy ; for he who hath set his Heart upon the Riches, or the Pomps of the World, is not in any Capacity of receiving or understanding the Gospel.

[Whatever (material) Virtue proceeds not from a Principle of Obedience, or Love to GOD, is no Part of the Allegiance we owe to Him, nor will be accepted by Him.

We cannot love GOD with all our Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength, while we cherish in our Bosom any inordinate Desire, Lust, or Passion, which claims an Interest in our Affec-

Affection's, a Share in our Services.

[A negative Holiness will not serve the turn : We must also do what Good we can in our Stations. He that is stripped hath the whole Race still before him.

An universal impartial Obedience to the Will of GOD, as far as 'tis already known to us, and a sincere Resolution to obey Him in all farther Revelations of his Will, entitles us to a peculiar Promise of GOD's Assistance, to guide us into all necessary Truth.

GOD's dwelling with good Men, *Job. xiv. 23.* making his Abode with them, cannot be understood in any other Sense, than that there is a very near Intercourse between GOD and good Men; that GOD is always ready to assist and succour them, in whatsoever they call upon Him for.

[When we are once at Liberty from the World, and have weaned our

our Affections from things below; and set them on a better and more enduring Substance, we shall joyfully go on, though we meet with Dangers and Inconveniences, and every Day's Task will be more easy and pleasant.

The doing the Will of God, is much more our Busineſſ, than any other Employment whatsoever, and ought to be constantly and vigorously pursued.

There are no Difficulties ſo great, no Afflictions ſo grievous, but by a lively Faith, a Prospect of the Joy ſet before us, and the Assistance of God's Grace, may be endured with Patience and Comfort; nay, with Joy and Satisfaction.

The End of the Suffering of our Blessed Redeemer, which was the greatest Design of Goodness and Love to us that could be undertaken, ought to engage us to a ſuitable Return of Obedience and Love to Him, though we were to

to die for His Sake, as He did for ours.

[In order to awaken our Diligence in the Business of our Salvation, we should have the Judgment of the last Day always present to our Minds: A serious Consideration of that Day would certainly, if any thing will, put a Check to the bold Impiety of this Age.

[Mens Care is, that their Children may be rich enough; they think any little thing will make them wise enough and good enough. Though Wisdom and Piety will supply the want of an Inheritance, helping a wise and good Man always to a Sufficiency. But what Inheritance can supply the want of Wisdom and of Virtue? No Wealth can shield from the Mischiefs of untutor'd Ignorance and Vice, or Impiety! It involves them rather deeper in both, to the utter Ruin most commonly both of Soul and Body.

[Who

[Who terminates his Hopes of pleasing GOD upon the Confidence of any other Strength, than that which is derived from Him, his Hopes are impious, and he must miscarry.

Man, born an indigent Creature, if he seeks his Happiness from GOD, answers the Intention of his Frame, makes a wise Choice of an Object adequate to all his Wants and Desires.

[The Worldling counts himself a Proprietor where he is but a Steward: The good things of this Life being not the Christian's Portion, are consigned to him only in trust; who fails in his Accounts, will find his Revenues are his Debts.

Debauchery and Atheism are the two Strong-holds of Sin. The first no more than an express Art against Thinking; an expedient to darken the Mind, divert Thought, and fence our Reflection.

[The remembering our Creator early,

early, lays that great Foundation of Wisdom, The designing a good End of all our Life, and preferring the best, that we live not we know not why. Early Piety is the best Antidote against the Infections of bad Company, and ill Examples.

[A Christian indeed is never right, till he seems to the World to be beside himself.

Light and Information is as necessary as Tenderness; both together make an excellent Conscience. Scrupulous Consciences must *first* study the Peace of the Church. *2dly*, Their own Liberties. *3dly*, To be humble towards God, and their Superiors, and willing to illuminate and regulate their Consciences by the Word.

If CHRIST's Death, and our own were ever in our Eye, how could we sin?

[If it were enough to repent the last Day of Life, how can a Man be sure to do that, unless he do it this very

very Day ; since this Day may, for ought he knows, be the last ?

The right placing, or misplacing Happiness, is the Rudder of a Man's Life.

[The Christian Religion proounds three noble Ends ; God's Glory ; Man's own Content here, and Salvation hereafter ; and the Edification and Conversion of our Neighbour.

Fools build on the Sand of Hearing and Professing ; wise Men on the unshakeable Rock of doing the Will of God.

To love, and heartily desire to do our Duty, is Half, and the best Half of the Work. He that in good Earnest would be a pious, honest Man, and who firmly resolves, by the Grace and Assistance of God, to do his best in order thereto, shall soon be one, and is past the hardest Part of the Work.

[Christian Peaceableness, which is a Fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. is also

also a substantial Part of Christianity; and therefore it is much to be preferred before those Circumstances Men contend for: And this Grace is a greater Proof of Men's having the Spirit of God, than Zeal for any external Mode of Worship, or Government in the Church.

Humility is a lowly Habit of Mind, by which Men are inclined to undervalue, rather than to overvalue themselves, and alway to demean themselves according to that Estimate; esteeming others better than themselves, unless the contrary be notorious.

Christian Humility is true Magnanimity, Courage, and Greatness of Spirit. The truly humble Christian is not affected with those little and low things with which a proud Man is, *viz.* Either with Flattery, or Neglect: He is not moved but with things of much greater Concernment.

[Humility

[Humility is a radical Virtue, from whence naturally spring Meekness, Patience, Peaceableness, Forgivenes of Injuries, Self-denial, Submission, and entire Resignation to the Will of GOD, Contentation in all Conditions, Thankfulness for all the Mercies of GOD, as much above our Desert.

Our Lord propounded his own Example to his Disciples, most expressly in Humility, and in Charity, *Matth. xi. 29.* and *John xiii. 34.* one empties the Soul of Self-conceit, and the other of false inordinate Self-love, which are the two great Springs of almost all Sins against GOD, our Neighbours, and our own Souls.

[Christian Humility, as it refers to GOD, teaches us such lowly Reverence and Self-abasement, as becomes our Meanness and Unworthiness, and the vast Distance we are at from Him, as we are frail Creatures and Sinners : It gives

gives us a quick and strong Sense of all God's undeserved Mercies and Favours ; the very least seem great to an humble Mind : It enables us to bear Disappointments and Afflictions, without Discontent or Murmuring : It disposes the whole Soul to be willingly governed by God's Laws, and to acquiesce in all the Dispensations of his Providence, as better for us than what we could have chosen for our selves.

[The humble Man esteems others better than himself, because he makes it his Care and Study to acquaint himself most with what is worst in himself, but with that which is best in other Men. He is not puffed up with Knowledge, Power, Riches, &c. because he hath always a holy Fear and Jealousy, of his not using those Advantages to those Ends for which God gave them to him, and so, being in a much worse Condition

for having received those Talents. Hee considers that the more he hath, the more he is indebted to those who want his Assistance; and so much greater Care is upon him to answere the Expectation of GOD, whose Steward he is.

The humble Man having a lower Opinion of Himself than others generally have, seldom meets with less Respect than he thinks due to him, and so is not tempted to Anger. He is always contented, and easily wants that false Happiness, which consists only in Fancy, and in Ignorance of better things; since wise Men and true Christians know, that they really enjoy no more than they use so as they ought, and will be able to give a good Account for, at the last great Day of Audit.

[Self-denial is to be practised indispensably, whenever our Desires consist not with our keeping a good Conscience towards GOD, and towards

wards Men ; and with the strictest Rules of Sobriety, Temperance, and Chastity, tho' we are counted Pools by the worldly-wise Men ; since we very well know, that we are then only truly wise, when we are wise for our greatest, best, and everlasting Interest.

[God's Holy Spirit, the Author and principal Agent by which all Graces are wrought in us, works upon the Soul, by turning our Mind and Will to this or that Object ; by determining our Thoughts to, and fixing them upon such Subjects, which, being seriously considered, are apt to strike or affect our rational Faculties, and to make lasting Impressions upon them. 'Tis hard to conceive how God works any Change, or good Effects in the Soul, otherwise than by the Operation of the Thoughts.

[If we would be safe here, and happy for ever, we ought frequently to consider, what Judgment we

have Reason to think GOD makes of us, in reference to what we are, to what we do, and to what we have; and to value our selves upon these Accounts as GOD doth, *i.e.* according to the Frame and Temper we are of, in doing what we do, and using what we have.

~~10~~ Smaller Failings, Surprizes, and Defects, will humble a Man of a more purified and refined Spirit, much more than those which are greater would do, whilst he was but of a less Growth in Christianity.

[Humility qualifies Men in an especial Manner for GOD's teaching, and so makes them capable of the best Wisdom. He who cannot be content to be a Fool for ever, must prize this Grace as the Foundation of true Wisdom, as well as of most other Graces and Gifts of GOD's Holy Spirit.

Humility best qualifies Men for the right Use of outward Prosperity, which GOD denies not to good

good Men, but in order to something which is better. [We must learn Humility from our L O R D, (as the great Lesson He teaches us) who, being much wiser, as well as greater, than *Solomon*, made choice of a very mean Parentage, Condition, Company, Course of Life: He neglected worldly Greatness, Honour, Applause, Pomp, Riches: He bore Affronts, Reproaches, Revilings, without any Return or Bitterness of Spirit. And we do best honour and obey Him, in being as like to Him as we possibly can, in his exemplary Humility, and Charity.

[The first Point of true and solid Wisdom, is to secure to our selves, by the Grace of God, and by our own utmost Endeavours to know and to do the Will of our L O R D, the Happiness of that Life which will never end. This must be done by assiduous, earnest Prayer to God, and by frequent

serious Reflection upon our daily Conduct; and particularly in what Preparation we always take Care to be, for the Society of Saints and Angels, and for the Enjoyment of God in Heaven for ever; to which endless Felicity this whole World, if we could possess it all, during this short Life, holds no more Proportion in Value, than it does in Duration.

The next Point of true Wisdom is, to slide thro' this Span of Life as easily, and as wisely and safely as we possibly can. To this End we must make no unnecessary Evils to our selves, either by false Judgments of things, or by giving Way to any Passion, Appetite, or Desire, farther than it can justify it self to our strict and calm Reason, and to the Laws of our holy Religion.

[That is true Learning, which makes a Man wise; and that is true Wisdom, which makes him good, *i. e.* which renders him ever obedient

obedient and dear to GOD; kind and useful to others, and most easy to himself.

The highest Perfection we are capable of in this Life is, as nearly to resemble, or to be as like to GOD as we possibly can. This consists in our retrieving that Image of GOD, in which we were at first made, in Righteousness and true Holiness, *i. e.* in living up to our highest Principle, the Reason of our Minds enlightened and improved by revealed Religion; in acting always in the best Manner we can, with Deliberation, Thought, and Judgment, and in order to the best Ends, *viz.* the promoting the Honour of GOD, and the Salvation of our own Souls, and of the Souls of others, to our Power; in doing all the good we can to all Men; in bearing with, and forgiving the Evils they do us. And nothing can conduce more to these great and worthy Purposes, and those

Ends for which we came into Being; than our living always under a lively Apprehension, that GOD's All-seeing Eye is ever upon us.

[The only Advantage of secular Greatness, Power, Authority, Wealth, Wit, and Learning, is to be able to bring more Honour to GOD, and to do more good to Men. Where this great and wise End is not in earnest proposed and aimed at, and also constantly and honestly pursued, these shining Outsides of Happiness, which the Men of this World doat upon, tend only to make them more Fools, *i.e.* less reasonable, and less considerate here, and so more miserable for ever.

[Nothing is a more just Reproach to the Reason of Mankind, nor more prejudicial to their Interest in both States, than Mens not making due and lasting Reflections upon the vast Difference there is between the comparative Moment of

of this Life, and the endless Duration of the next.

[In frequent, long, needless, and impertinent Visits, Men do not only murder their own Time, which they they should employ better, but do also hinder them, who would choose to make better Use of theirs, were they not robbed of it by those, who understand little else than such bare Forms of mistaken Civility.

[He only is truly wise, who is wise for Eternity! That is a false Wisdom, for which a Man will most certainly find, and think himself a Fool a few Years hence, and so for ever after.

[The Gospel, or the new Covenant, wherever it is received and comply'd with, is a vital Principle of Righteousness in the Souls of Men ; it is an inward and living Impression upon their Minds. *This Law of the Spirit of Life in CHRIST JESUS, makes us free from the Law of Sin and Death,* Rom. viii. 2.

We are by the Gospel made Partakers of that Life and Strength from GOD, which is able to destroy the Power of Sin, and enables us to demonstrate an heavenly Conversation, and divine Life in the World.

Every one is by so much more acceptable to GOD, by how much more he resembles GOD. Nothing but a constant Care to keep his Commandments can render us such as He can take Pleasure in. If any Man doth the Will of GOD, him will the Father and the Son love; *they will come into him, and make their abode with him*, John xiv.

[CHRIST is formed in us, and we have Fellowship with Him, by his Spirit dwelling in us, when, by a true Faith we do deny our selves, submit our selves in a deep Sense of our Folly and Weakness, to his Wisdom and Power; comply with his Will; and, by a holy Affiance in Him, subordinate our selves to

to his Pleasure; for these are vital Acts of a Gospel Faith.

A meer Conformity of the *outward* Man to the Law of God, is not sufficient to bring a Man to eternal Life; but the *inward* Man also must deeply receive the Impression of the Divine Law, so as to be made like to God. Christian Perfection is not consistent with inordinate, terrene Loves, or Affections set on things below. This mundane Spirit, which acts so strongly in the Children of this World, must be subdued and mortified.

[That the Gospel-Righteousness is conveyed to us by Faith, appears from these two Considerations; *1st*, The Gospel lays a strong Foundation of a cheerful Dependance upon the Grace and Love of God, and Affiance in it: *2dly*, A true Evangelick Faith is no lazy, or languid thing, but an ardent breathing or thirsting after divine Grace and Righteousness.

Righteousness ; it looks beyond a
meer Pardon of Sin, and mainly
pursues after an inward Participa-
tion of the divine Nature.

A good Man should always find
himself upon holy Ground, and
never depart so far into the Affairs
of this Life, as to be without ei-
ther the Call, or Compass of Re-
ligion ; he should always think,
wheresoever he is, that God and
the blessed Angels are there, with
whom he should converse in a Way
of Purity.

True Religion is a new Nature
informing the Souls of Men ; it is
a Godlike Frame of Spirit, disco-
vering it self most of all in serene
and clear Minds, in deep Humility,
Meekness, Self-denial, universal
Love of GOD, and all true Good-
ness ; without Partiality, and with-
out Hypocrify ; whereby we are
taught to know GOD, and know-
ing Him, to love Him, and to con-
form ourselves as much as may be,
to

to all that Perfection which shines forth in Him.

True Religion teaches and enables us to die to this World, and to rise above sensual and earthly Pleasures, which darken the Mind, and hinder it from enjoying the divine Light. Wicked Men bury their Souls in their Bodies, their Souls are only Servants to their Senses ; all their Projects and Designs are bounded within the Compass of this Earth which they tread upon.

To walk with God, is in Scripture made the Character of a good Man ; and it's the highest Perfection and Privilege of created Nature, to converse with the Divinity. Whereas, on the contrary, wicked Men converse with nothing but their Lusts, and the Vanities of this fading Life.

[Religion enlarges all the Faculties of the Soul, and begets a true Ingenuity, Liberty, and Amplitude,

plitude, the most free and generous Spirit in the Minds of good Men.

Religion restores Man to a just Power and Dominion over himself, and enables him to overcome his Self-will and Passions.

[He that will not submit himself to, nor comply with, the Eternal and Uncreated Will, but, instead of it, endeavours to set up his own Will, makes himself the most real Idol in the World, and exalts himself against all that is called GOD, and ought to be worshipped.

Religion directs and enables a Man to propound to himself the best End (viz.) the Glory of GOD, and his own becoming like unto GOD. Our seeking the Glory of GOD, is our endeavouring to partake more of GOD, and to resemble Him (as much as we can) in true Holiness, and every divine Virtue.

[He that pursues any worldly Interest, or earthly thing, as his End,

End, becomes himself also earthly; and the more the Soul directs it self to God, the more it becomes God-like, deriving a Print of that Glory and Beauty upon it self, which it converseth with; as it is excellently set forth by the Apostle, *2 Cor. iii. But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory.*

We then seek the Glory of God, when God becomes so great in our Eyes, and all created things so little, that we reckon upon nothing as worthy of our Aims, but a serious Participation of the Divine Nature; and the Exercise of divine Virtues, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-sufferings, Kindness, Goodness, and the like: And when we love God above all things, and endeavour to be most like Him, we declare plainly, that we count nothing better than He is.

[Heaven is not a thing without
us;

us; nor is Happiness any thing distinct from a true Conjunction of the Mind with GOD, in a secret Feeling of his Goodness, and Reciprocation of Affection to Him; wherein the divine Glory most unfolds it self.

[Religion begets the greatest Serenity and Composedness of Mind; and brings the truest Contentment, the purest, and most satisfying Joy and Pleasure to every holy Soul.

Religion advanceth the Soul to an holy Boldness, and humble Familiarity with GOD; and to a comfortable Confidence concerning the Love of GOD toward it, and its own Salvation. The right Apprehensions of GOD are such as are apt to beget Love to GOD, Delight and Confidence in Him.

[We can present GOD with no Offering so acceptable to Him as our Love, and Delight, and Confidence in Him; and when He comes into

into the Souls of Men, He makes these his Throne, his Place of Rest, as finding the greatest Agreeableness therein to his own Essence.

[Religion spiritualizes material things, and carries up the Souls of good Men from sensible and earthly things, to things intellectual and divine.

We should love all things in God, and God in all things; because He is All in All, the Beginning and Original of Being, the perfect Idea of their Goodness, and the End of their Motion.

Religion raiseth the Minds of good Men, to a due Observance of, and Attendance upon, Divine Providence; and enables them to serve the Will of God, and to acquiesce in it.

['Tis nothing else but Hellish Pride and Self-Love that makes Men serve themselves, and to set up themselves as Idols against GOD.

To a good Man to serve the Will of

of God, it is in the trueſt and beſt ſenſe to ſerve himſelf, who knows himſelf to be nothing without, or in opposition to God. This is the moſt Divine Life that can be, for a Man to act in the World upon Eternal Designs, and to be ſo wholly devoted to the Will of God, as to ſerve it moſt faithfully and entirely.

[This is the proper Character of holy Souls; their Wills are ſo fully reſolved into the divine Will, that they in all things ſubſcribe to it, without any Murmuring or Debates: They reſt well ſatisfy'd with, and take Complacency in, any Paſſages of Divine Dispencia-
tion, as being ordered and diſpoſed by a Mind and Wiſdom above, according to the highest Rules of Goodneſſeſs.

As created Beings, that are ca-
pable of conveſting with God, ſtand nearer to God, or further off from
Him; and as they partake more or
leſſeſ of his Likeneſſeſ, ſo they partake
more

more or less of that Happiness which flows forth from Him ; and God communicates Himself in different Degrees to them.

[True Holiness or Religion, and true Happiness, are but two several Notions of one thing, rather than distinct in themselves. Religion delivers us from Hell, by infesting us in a Possession of true Life and Bliss. Hell is rather a Nature than a Place ; and Heaven cannot be so truly defined by anything without us, as by something that is within us.

[Wicked Men, by destroying what there is from God within them, and divesting themselves of all that which hath any Alliance to God, or true Goodness, and transforming themselves into the diabolical Image, fit themselves for correspondence, and converse with the Devil. The Difference between the Devil and wicked Men, is rather

the

the Difference of a Name, than of Natures: Wheresoever we see Malice, Revenge, Pride, Envy, Hatred, Self-will, and Self-love, we may say, here, and there is that evil Spirit.

[As the enjoying of God, and conversing with Him, consists not so much in a Change of Place, as in the Participation of the Divine Nature, and in our Assimilation unto God; so our conversing with the Devil, is not so much by a mutual, local Presence, as by an Imitation of a wicked and sinful Nature, derived upon Men's own Souls. Where we find Uncleaness, Intemperance, Covetousness, or any such impure, or unhallow'd Behaviour, we may say, Here Satan's Throne is.]

All Men, in reality converse either with God, or with the Devil, and walk in the Confines either of Heauen, or of Hell: They have their Fellowship either with the

FATHER

FATHER and the SON, as St. John speaks, or else with the apostate and evil Angels; [Our Assimilation to God, and Conformity to Him, instates us in a firm Possession of true Happiness, which is nothing else but God himself, who is all Being and Blessedness; and our Dissimilitude to God, and Apostacy from Him, involves us in our own Misery, and sets us at the greatest Enmity to what our unsatiable Desires most of all crave for, which is the Enjoyment of true and satisfying Good.]

The Spirit which is from Heaven, is always out of an inbred Nobleness which bears it up, carried upwards again towards Heaven, from whence it came; powerfully resisting all things that would deprive it of GOD, or hinder it from returning to its Original; it is always moving upwards, in an even and steady Way, towards GOD, from whence it came.

[It

[Is .is indeed nothing else but Hell it self in the Souls of Men, that gives the Devil such free Entertainment there ; the Wills of Men, stamped with a diabolical Form, and bearing the Devil's Image and Inscription upon them, declare his Right over them.

[The Use of any Arts, Rites, or Ceremonies, not understood, insignificant Forms of Words, &c. of which we can give no rational or divine Account, this indeed is nothing else but a kind of Magick, which the Devil himself owns, and gives Life to, though he may not be corporeally present, or require presently any further Covenant from the Users of them. The Devil, no question, is present to all his own Rites and Ceremonies, though Men discern him not; and may, upon the Use of them, secretly produce those Effects which may gain Credit to them.

[Let us endeavour to acquaint our

ourselves with our own Lives, and with the true Rules of Life, which Solomon calls, the Way of Life; (Prov. xv. 24.) *The Way of Life is above to the wise, that he may depart from Hell beneath.*

Let us inform our Minds as much as may be, in the Excellency and Loveliness of practical Religion; that, beholding it in its own Beauty and Amiability, we may the more sincerely close with it: For true Religion, which is the true Wisdom, is (as the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* speaks) *Chap. vii.*

25, 26. A pure Influence, flowing from the Glory of the Almighty, the Brightness of the Everlasting Light, the unspotted Mirror of the Power of GOD, and the Image of his Goodness.

[Let us therefore labour to purge our own Souls from all fleshly, and all worldly Pollutions; let us breathe after the Aid and Assistance of the Divine Spirit, that it may irradiate

irradiate and enlighten our Minds, that so we may be able to see Divine Things in a Divine Light; let us endeavour to live more and more in a careful and daily Practice of all those Rules of religious and holy living, commended to us by our ever-blessed Lord and Saviour: So shall we know Religion better; and knowing it, we shall love it; and loving it, we shall be still more and more ambitiously pursuing after it, till we come to a fuller Attainment of that Purity and Holiness it demands; and thereby of our own greater Perfection here in this Life, and unspeakable Happiness in that which will never end.

*Whoso him behoft
Inwardly and oft,
How hard it were to fit
From Bed unto the Pit,
And from the Pit to Pain,
That ne'er shall cease again,
Would not do one Sin,
The whole World to win.*

